

The New York Public Library  
**Best Books  
of 2021**

# ADULTS

Librarians and staff from across The New York Public Library system have compiled a list of the best books of 2021 for adults, including literary fiction, genre fiction, nonfiction, comics, and much more.

Explore the list—and more for readers of all ages: [nypl.org/bestbooks](https://nypl.org/bestbooks)

## FICTION

- Afterparties: Stories**  
Anthony Veasna So
- Bolla: A Novel**  
Pajtim Statovci, translated from the Finnish by David Hackston
- Detransition, Baby: A Novel**  
Torrey Peters
- Hao: Stories**  
Ye Chun
- Hell of a Book: A Novel**  
Jason Mott
- Hummingbird Salamander**  
Jeff Vandermeer
- I Will Die in a Foreign Land: A Novel**  
Kalani Pickhart
- Infinite Country: A Novel**  
Patricia Engel
- Matrix: A Novel**  
Lauren Groff
- Mona**  
Pola Oloixarac, translated from the Spanish by Adam Morris

- My Monticello: Fiction**  
Jocelyn Nicole Johnson
- The Reading List: A Novel**  
Sara Nisha Adams
- The Rock Eaters: Stories**  
Brenda Peynado
- Velvet Was the Night**  
Silvia Moreno-Garcia
- Walking on Cowrie Shells: Stories**  
Nana Nkweti
- What Storm, What Thunder: A Novel**  
Myriam J.A. Chancy

## NONFICTION

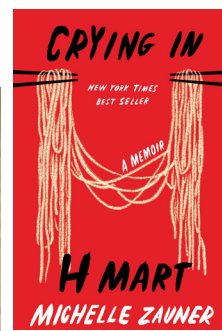
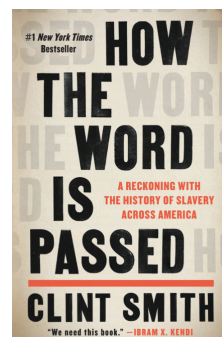
- The Breaks: An Essay**  
Julietta Singh
- The Code Breaker: Jennifer Doudna, Gene Editing, and the Future of the Human Race**  
Walter Isaacson
- Crying in H Mart: A Memoir**  
Michelle Zauner

- Empire of Pain: The Secret History of the Sackler Dynasty**  
Patrick Radden Keefe
- Fuzz: When Nature Breaks the Law**  
Mary Roach
- How the Word Is Passed: A Reckoning with the History of Slavery Across America**  
Clint Smith
- In the Shadow of the Empress: The Defiant Lives of Maria Theresa, Mother of Marie Antoinette, and Her Daughters**  
Nancy Goldstone

- My Broken Language: A Memoir**  
Quiara Alegria Hudes
- Seek You: A Journey Through American Loneliness**  
Kristen Radtke
- White Magic: Essays**  
Elissa Washuta

## FANTASY

- The Chosen and the Beautiful**  
Nghì Vo
- The Jasmine Throne**  
Tasha Suri



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**A Master of Djinn**  
P. Djèlí Clark

**No Gods, No Monsters: A Novel**  
Cadwell Turnbull

**She Who Became the Sun: A Novel**  
Shelley Parker-Chan

**The Tangleroot Palace: Stories**  
Marjorie Liu

**The Unbroken**  
C.L. Clark

## HORROR

**The Book of Accidents: A Novel**  
Chuck Wendig

**The Dangers of Smoking in Bed: Stories**  
Mariana Enriquez, translated from the Spanish by Megan McDowell

**The Death of Jane Lawrence: A Novel**  
Caitlin Starling

**Flowers for the Sea**  
Zin E. Rocklyn

**The Lighthouse Witches: A Novel**  
C.J. Cooke

**Never Have I Ever: Stories**  
Isabel Yap

**Red X: A Novel**  
David Demchuk

**Revelator: A Novel**  
Daryl Gregory

**The Route of Ice & Salt**  
José Luis Zárate, translated from the Spanish by David Bowles

**Sorrowland: A Novel**  
Rivers Solomon

**This Thing Between Us: A Novel**  
Gus Moreno

**Unfortunate Elements of My Anatomy**  
Hailey Piper

**When Things Get Dark: Stories Inspired by Shirley Jackson**  
Ellen Datlow (editor)

## MYSTERY, THRILLER, AND SUSPENSE

**All Her Little Secrets: A Novel**  
Wanda M. Morris

**Bullet Train: A Novel**  
Kotaro Isaka, translated from the Japanese by Sam Malissa

**The Burning Girls: A Novel**  
C.J. Tudor

**Clark and Division: A Novel**  
Naomi Hirahara

**The Echo Wife**  
Sarah Gailey

**56 Days: A Thriller**  
Catherine Ryan Howard

**Finlay Donovan Is Killing It: A Mystery**  
Elle Cosimano

**Hostage**  
Clare Mackintosh

**The Jigsaw Man: A Novel**  
Nadine Matheson

**Mirrorland: A Novel**  
Carole Johnstone

**Never Saw Me Coming: A Novel**  
Vera Kurian

**Northern Spy: A Novel**  
Flynn Berry

**Razorblade Tears: A Novel**  
S.A. Cosby

**Rock Paper Scissors: A Novel**  
Alice Feeney

**Ruby Red Herring: An Avery Ayers Antique Mystery**  
Tracy Gardner

## ROMANCE

**Act Your Age, Eve Brown: A Novel**  
Talia Hibbert

**The Duchess Hunt**  
Lorraine Heath

**Duke, Actually: A Novel**  
Jenny Holiday

**The Gentle Art of Fortune Hunting**  
K.J. Charles

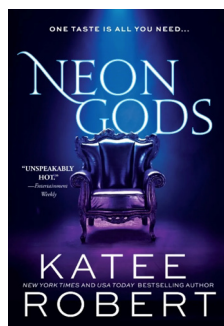
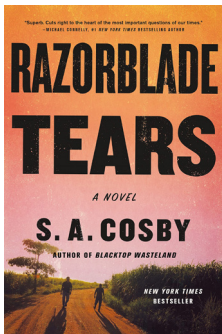
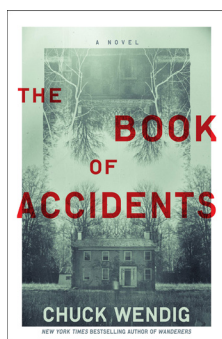
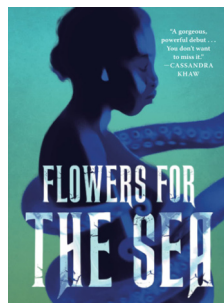
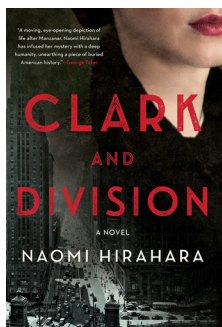
**The Intimacy Experiment**  
Rosie Danan

**The Invitation**  
Vi Keeland

**A Lot Like Adiós**  
Alexis Daria

**Neon Gods**  
Katee Robert

**Out of Character**  
Annabeth Albert



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- Payback's a Witch: A Novel**  
Lana Harper
- People We Meet on Vacation: A Novel**  
Emily Henry
- Roommate**  
Sarina Bowen

- Seven Days in June: A Novel**  
Tia Williams
- Waiting for a Scot Like You: The Union of the Rakes**  
Eva Leigh
- The Wildest Ride**  
Marcella Bell

## SCIENCE FICTION

- The Last Watch**  
J.S. Dewes
- Light from Uncommon Stars**  
Ryka Aoki
- Project Hail Mary: A Novel**  
Andy Weir
- Remote Control**  
Nnedi Okorafor

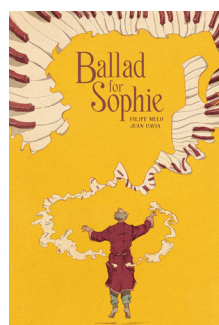
## COMICS

- Asadora!, Vol. 1**  
Naoki Urasawa
- Ballad for Sophie**  
Filipe Melo, translated from the Portuguese by Gabriela Soares, illustrated by Juan Cavia
- Barbalien: Red Planet**  
Jeff Lemire & Tate Brombal, art by Gabriel Hernandez Walta
- The Black Panther Party: A Graphic Novel History**  
David F. Walker with art, colors, and letters by Marcus Kwame Anderson
- Crude: A Memoir**  
Pablo Fajardo and Sophie Tardy-Joubert, translated from the Spanish by Hannah Chute, drawing and color by Damien Roudeau
- Cyclopedia Exotica**  
Aminder Dhaliwal
- The Department of Truth, Volume One: The End of the World**  
James Tynion IV, art by Martin Simmonds

- For Justice: The Serge & Beate Klarsfeld Story**  
Pascal Bresson, art by Sylvain Dorange
- Shadow Life**  
Hiromi Goto, art by Ann Xu
- Thirsty Mermaids**  
Kat Leyh

## POETRY

- Doppelgangbanger: Poems**  
Cortney Lamar Charleston
- Extremely Lightweight Guns: Poems**  
Nikki Moustaki
- frank: sonnets**  
Diane Seuss
- If God Is a Virus: Poems**  
Seema Yasmin
- Mama Phife Represents: A Verse Memoir**  
Cheryl Boyce-Taylor
- Oh You Robot Saints!**  
Rebecca Morgan Frank
- The Perseverance: Poems**  
Raymond Antrobus
- Popular Longing**  
Natalie Shapero
- Transversal: Poems**  
Urayoán Noel
- What Noise Against the Cane**  
Desiree C. Bailey



### About Best Books

Every year our librarians and staff select noteworthy new books for readers of all ages. These lists have always sought to reflect the diversity of New York City's readership. Special thanks to our Best Books committees, the members of which have read thousands of books to bring readers these recommendations. Learn more: [nypl.org/bestbooks](https://nypl.org/bestbooks)

### About The New York Public Library

Founded in 1895, The New York Public Library is the nation's largest public library system, with neighborhood branches throughout the Bronx, Manhattan, and Staten Island, and scholarly research centers. Serving millions of patrons a year both in-person and online, the Library offers free materials, classes, and programs for users of all ages.



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